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F.B.I. Cites Cash Woes As Motive

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LOS ANGELES, Oct. 3 — It was probably money problems, more than his relationship with a Russian woman, that led a veteran agent to give Government secrets to Soviet spies, officials of the Federal Bureau of Investigation said here today.

The agent, Richard W. Miller, 47 years old, had a wife and eight children, a residence in Los Angeles and a weekend house in San Diego County, according to Richard T. Bretzing, the special agent in charge of the bureau's Los Angeles division. At his level of seniority, Mr. Miller would have earned about \$50,000 a year, a bureau spokesman said.

As an agent of the bureau's counter-intelligence section, Mr. Miller had full access to files at the bureau headquarters in the Westwood section of Los Angeles, according to Steve R. Griffi, a spokesman.

Morale at the agency was said to be shaken by the first recorded instance of an F.B.I. agent's facing accusations of

espionage activity against his own Government. Reporters who crowded a news conference by Mr. Bretzing were first cautioned by a spokesman that the topic was an "emotional" one for the agency.

Mr. Griffi, speaking to reporters after the news conference, said that he had worked with Mr. Miller and that he could only describe him as "amiable, you could talk to him."

He was known to other agents as "a family man," Mr. Griffi said. "I never can remember Mr. Miller out after working hours" socializing with other agents.

Bryce Christensen, assistant special agent in charge of foreign counterintelligence, said in a 28-page affidavit that between late May and September of this year, Mr. Miller had had "numerous personal meetings" with Svetlana Ogorodnikova, a 34-year-old Soviet emigre. Mrs. Ogorodnikova and her husband, Nikolay, are also under arrest.

Woman 'Seemed Sympathetic'

Mr. Christensen said he questioned Mr. Miller Sept. 28 and learned that he had told the Soviet woman "of his personal, professional and financial problems, to which she seemed sympathetic."

Asked whether Mr. Miller "was involved in a personal relationship" with Mrs. Ogorodnikova, neither Mr. Christensen nor Mr. Bretzing would comment.

Mr. Bretzing tersely described the relationship as "that of a person who was approached and persuaded to cooperate in betraying his country."

"He had some financial problems," Mr. Bretzing said. "I believe those may have motivated him."

In Washington, however, other bureau officials said surveillance of meetings between Mr. Miller and Mrs. Ogorodnikova indicated that the two had a personal, very likely sexual, relationship.

The bureau said Mrs. Ogorodnikova and her husband, who was also known as Nikolay Wolfson, had emigrated to the United States in 1973. She worked as "a day nurse" and he as a butcher, according to Mr. Bretzing.

Neighbors Were Suspicious

Acquaintances described Mrs. Ogorodnikova as about 5 feet 4 inches tall and slender, with blondish hair.

At the rundown two-story apartment building where the couple lived with their 13-year-old son, Matthew, neighbors recalled Mrs. Ogorodnikova as an enterprising woman who used to rent Russian-made movies for showing at a neighborhood movie theater, charging \$3 or \$4 to those who wanted to see films from home. They said she also sometimes distributed copies of magazines produced in the Soviet Union, magazines with bright color pictures and stories of a life of harmony and progress at home.

Alexander Polovets, the publisher of a Russian-language weekly newspaper here, Almanac-Panorama, said that the couple were well known in the emigre community because of those activities, which, he said, had aroused suspicion and rumors.

He said that Mrs. Ogorodnikova had talked of returning several times to the Soviet Union with her son, although it was very unusual, he said, for emigrés to obtain permission to do so.

Raisa Okopnik, a neighbor in the predominantly Jewish-Russian building, said questions had been raised over how the Ogorodnikovs had managed to emigrate in the first place, since they were Christians and not Jews.

"The Christians can't come from the Soviet here," Mrs. Okopnik said. "Only when the government sends them." Jews, she said, can "go because Israel calls us."



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Richard W. Miller in a 1963 college yearbook photograph.